

REMARKS

Receipt of the office action mailed October 14, 2008 is acknowledged. Claims 1-11 are pending in the application, and are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over the applicant's admitted prior art, and further in view of Mimura (JP 10-66197). In keeping with the foregoing amendments and the following argument, reconsideration of the rejected claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits herewith an amended Figure 1. As amended, Figure 1 includes now includes an arrow pointing from the compressor 22 to the control unit 23, in addition to the original arrow pointing from the control unit 23 to the compressor 22. Support for the foregoing change can be found in the specification at least at page 4, 4th line from the bottom, which states "The control unit 23 can read the compression level of the compressor 22." Further support can be found at page 6, 4th and 5th full paragraphs, which respectively state that the the control unit 23 can read the compression level of the compressor, and that the control unit 23 is constantly monitoring the compression level of the compressor 22. Support for the change can also be found in original (unamended) claim 1, which stated "wherein the control means reads the compression level of the compressor." Accordingly, no new matter has been added, and revised Figure 1 is in proper form.

In response to the rejection of claim 1, claim 1 has been amended and now positively recites, in part, that the controlling means is capable of controlling the gain of the gain controlling means and reading from the compressor the compression amount level of the sound signal in the compressor at certain time intervals. The controlling means reads from the compressor the compression amount level of the sound signal at certain time intervals in a case where the compressor compresses the sound signal with the specified ratio while gradually increasing the gain of the gain controlling means, and determines whether or not howling has been generated based on whether the read compression amount level has a value equal to or higher than a specified value, and further calculates a howling margin based on the gain of the gain controlling means when it is determined that howling has been generated.

Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at least at page 4, last full paragraph, page 6, first full paragraph, page 7, second full paragraph, and throughout the specification. No new matter has been added.

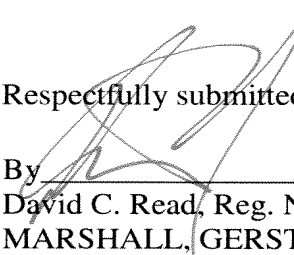
By comparison, the foregoing is not taught or suggested by the admitted prior art, and is not taught or suggested by Mimura. Mimura merely discloses a system for automatically selecting a filter for detecting a frequency of a howling and removing it, but the reference does not disclose a specific method for measuring a howling margin. That is, Mimura does not disclose the limitation of claim 1 requiring that the controlling means reads from the compressor the compression amount level of the sound signal at certain time intervals in a case where the compressor compresses the sound signal with the specified ratio, while gradually increasing the gain of the gain controlling means, and determine whether or not howling has been generated based on whether the read compression amount level has a value equal to or higher than a specified value. Accordingly, the cited combination does not teach or properly suggest the recited claim limitations, and claim 1 is in allowable form.

Claim 2 has been amended to correspond to the revised language of claim 1. Claims 2-11 all depend from claim 1, either directly or through intervening claims.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,


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